[‘uf] upward.[11] The word ‘uf refers only to the Torah, as it is written: Wilt thou cause thine eyes to close [hata'if][12] upon it? It is gone.[13] And ‘reshef’ refers only to the demons, as it is said: The wasting of hunger, and the devouring of the reshef [fiery bolt] and bitter destruction.[14] R. Simeon b. Lakish says: If one studies the Torah, painful sufferings are kept away from him. For it is said: And the sons of reshef fly upward. The word ‘uf refers only to the Torah, as it is written: ‘Wilt thou cause thine eyes to close upon it? It is gone’. And ‘reshef’ refers only to painful sufferings, as it is said: ‘The wasting of hunger, and the devouring of the reshef [fiery bolt]. R. Johanan said to him: This[15] is known even to school children.[16] For it is said: And He said: If thou wilt diligently hearken to the voice of the Lord thy God, and wilt do that which is right in His eyes, and wilt give ear to His commandments, and keep all His statutes, I will put none of the diseases upon thee which I have put upon the Egyptians; for I am the Lord that healeth thee.[17] Rather [should you say]: If one has the opportunity to study the Torah and does not study it, the Holy One, blessed be He, visits him with ugly and painful sufferings which stir him up. For it is said: I was dumb with silence, I kept silence from the good thing, and my pain was stirred up.[18] ‘The good thing’ refers only to the Torah, as it is said: For I give you good doctrine; forsake ye not My teaching.[19]

R. Zera (some say, R. Hanina b. Papa) says: Come and see how the way of human beings differs from the way of the Holy One, blessed be He. It is the way of human beings that when a man sells[20] a valuable object to his fellow, the seller grieves and the buyer rejoices. The Holy One, blessed be He, however, is different. He gave the Torah to Israel and rejoiced. For it is said: For I give you good doctrine; forsake ye not My teaching.

Raba (some say, R. Hisda) says: If a man sees that painful sufferings visit him, let him examine his conduct. For it is said: Let us search and try our ways, and return unto the Lord.[21] If he examines and finds nothing [objectionable], let him attribute it to the neglect of the study of the Torah. For it is said: Happy is the man whom Thou chastenest, O Lord, and teachest out of Thy law.[22] If he did attribute it [thus], and still did not find [this to be the cause], let him be sure that these are chastenings of love. For it is said: For whom the Lord loveth He correcteth.[23]

Raba, in the name of R. Sahorah, in the name of R. Huna, says: If the Holy One, blessed be He, is pleased with a man, he crushes him with painful sufferings. For it is said: And the Lord was pleased with [him, hence] he crushed him by disease.[24] Now, you might think that this is so even if he did not accept them with love. Therefore it is said: To see if his soul would offer itself in restitution.[25] Even as the trespass-offering must be brought by consent, so also the sufferings must be endured with consent. And if he did accept them, what is his reward? He will see his seed, prolong his days.[26] And more than that, his knowledge [of the Torah] will endure with him. For it is said: The purpose of the Lord will prosper in his hand.[27]

R. Jacob b. Idi and R. Aha b. Hanina differ with regard to the following: The one says: Chastenings of love are such as do not involve the intermission of study of the Torah. For it is said: Happy is the man whom Thou chastenest, O Lord, and teachest out of Thy law.[28] And the other one says: Chastenings of love are such as do not involve the intermission of prayer. For it is said: Blessed be God, Who hath not turned away my prayer, nor His mercy from me.[29] R. Abba the son of R. Hiyya b. Abba said to them: Thus said R. Hiyya b. Abba in the name of R. Johanan: Both of them are chastenings of love. For it is said: For whom the Lord loveth He correcteth.[30] Why then does it say: ‘And teachest him out of Thy law’? Do not read telammedennu, [Thou teachest him] but telammedenu, [Thou teachest us]. Thou teachest us this thing out of Thy law as a conclusion a fortiori from the law concerning tooth and eye.[31] Tooth and eye are only one limb of the man, and still [if they are hurt], the slave obtains thereby his freedom. How much more so with painful sufferings which torment the whole body of a man! And this agrees with a saying of R. Simeon b. Lakish. For R. Simeon b. Lakish said: The word ‘covenant’ is mentioned in connection with salt, and the word ‘covenant’ is mentioned in connection with sufferings: the word ‘covenant’ is mentioned in